

Finance and Government Operations Commission Meeting Minutes
Middletown, Connecticut
February 26, 2014
Municipal Building Room 208
7:00 P.M.

Present: Thomas Serra, David Bauer, Hope Kasper, Deb Kleckowski, Mary Bartolotta, Diana Doyle, William Russo, Damon Braasch, Linda Bettencourt, Brigham Smith, Bruce Driska, Gerald Daley

Absent: None

1. Thomas Serra called the meeting to order and requested a motion to approve the minutes from the January 29, 2014 Finance and Government meeting. David Bauer made the motion to approve and Hope Kasper seconded. Approved unanimously.
2. Public Comments on the Agenda: None
3. The following Departments have submitted items to be discussed:

General Counsel – Appropriation Request up to \$40,000 to fund position of Assistant General Counsel through the end of the fiscal year; Resolution authorizing Mayor to execute a Memo of Understanding between the City and Local 466 of AFSCME Council 4

- Thomas Serra recommended not discussing the Appropriation Request for \$40,000 at this time; his suggestion was to let the caucuses deal with this during their budget deliberations.
- Hope Kasper made the motion to approve and Deb Kleckowski seconded.
- David Bauer proposed a friendly amendment be made to postpone until the April budget meetings.
- Hope accepted the friendly amendment to postpone and Tom seconded. Approved unanimously.
- City Attorney Brigham Smith discussed the Resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute an MOU between the City and the Local 466 AFSCME Council 4 regarding the 8 week vacation carry-over time. The Board of Education 466 employees would be using their vacation time by June 30, 2014. If such member requested vacation time and were denied, then they would be paid out their requested time. If they do not use their excess vacation time by June 30, 2014 then they would forfeit their vacation time. The 466 members on the City side have to submit their vacation time by November 30, 2014 and use it by the end of the calendar year. Again, if the member was denied their requested vacation time, then the individual would be able to cash that time in.
- David suggested the Management make themselves more aware of their employee's vacation time being accumulated and encourage the use of it.
Tom asked David if he would like to accept the spirit of this motion, David agreed and Tom seconded.

-Approved unanimously to send to Council Floor-

Town Clerk – Appropriation Request for \$6953.90 to fulfill statutory duties of office through the end of the fiscal year

- Linda Bettencourt explained the Town Clerk's Office has statutory duties that are required to be met and without this Appropriation they are unable to do so. An example would be the Permanently Bound Index which the office is required to print; unfortunately they are unable to do so at this time because there is no money to purchase the printer cartridges.
- David made the motion to approve and Deb seconded.

-Approved unanimously to send to Council Floor-

Public Works – Appropriation Request for \$25,000 to cover winter/snow OT for the Parks Department; Appropriation Request for \$425,000 to cover winter/snow OT associated costs; Resolution noting Standardization Committee bid waiver approval, for the purchase of storage shed for \$19,579.50 with LoCIP funds

- Tom made the motion to approve both winter/snow OT costs for Parks and Public Works, Hope seconded.

-Approved unanimously to send to the Council Floor-

- Bill explained the bid waiver request for the purchase of a storage shed from Kloter Farms in the amount of \$19,579.50. The shed would be located at 58 Bernie O'Rourke Drive, next to the American Legion building and store City maintenance equipment and supplies.
- David made the motion to approve and Hope seconded.

- Approved unanimously to send to the Council Floor-

Planning and Zoning – Appropriation Request for \$10,000 to survey 50 acre property on Bear Hill Road (in conjunction with sale of land to Dattco at 182 Tuttle Road); Resolution authorizing Mayor to sign necessary documents to convey 182 Tuttle Road to Dattco for the sum of \$336,000 (in conjunction with survey of Bear Hill Road property); Appropriation request for \$80,000 for demolition of on Wadsworth Street homes being deeded to the City by the State of CT; Resolution seeking approval for a fixed partial tax abatement for AJ, LLC at 141 Coe Avenue; Discussion of Vinci property sale for \$210,000

- Gerald Daley discussed the \$10,000 Appropriation Request for the survey of the 50 acre property on Bear Hill Road. He explained that this is in conjunction with the Dattco land purchase on Tuttle Road. The City owns a parcel of open space located on Tuttle Rd, in which Dattco would like to purchase. In order to do this the state requires an offset of open space property be surveyed in order for this transaction to take place. The cost of the survey is \$10,000, and it was the lowest bid provided.
- Dave made the motion to approve the Mayor's signature on the necessary documents, and Hope seconded.

- Approved unanimously-

- Gerry's second request made for the \$80,000, Wadsworth Street demolition for blighted homes. Mary made a motion requesting to have a friendly amendment made stating that the City of Middletown would have the deeds in hand before the demolition, Tom seconded and Hope opposed. Deb asked if someone could talk to the delegation regarding why the State has not done anything with these properties. Tom and Jerry both said that they would inquire.
- Gerry discussed the partial fixed abatement for the property located on 141 Coe Avenue, this does not include the Personal Property taxes, which the City would still collect in full. Dave made the motion to approve and Mary seconded. Approved unanimously.
- Gerry's discussed the acquisition of the Vinci property located on River Road for \$210,000. The recommendation to purchase was 4 to 1 by the Economic Development Committee. The property is under an acre in size, un-developmental but would be suitable for recreation purposes. This property is land locked by property already owned by the City, without this purchase there is no guarantee what might happen to it.
- Mary stated that to her knowledge the Riverfront Committee did not recommend purchasing this property from the Vinci's.
- Mary was also in agreement with Hope regarding the cost of spending almost a quarter of a million dollars on a piece of property which no one can develop and is also land locked by City owned property.
- Mary also said that she hadn't been able to meet with the Assessors but believed the property to be worth less than one hundred thousand dollars.
- Tom stated this would be moved to the Council Floor, Dave seconded with the advisement to the Council that this failed 3 to 2 as a recommendation from the Finance & Government Committee. Hope, Deb and Mary were the dissenting votes.

Assessor –Update on the status of the Revaluation Process

- Damon Braasch stated that the re-valuation is complete and that the Grand List has been signed.
- The Board of Assessment Appeals now will be looking into roughly 135 residential appeals.
- Hope asked if copies all of Vision's reports and letters mailed to the tax payers were in the Tax Assessors office for preview; Damon responded, yes.
- Damon's rough guess is there is a \$5 million dollar reduction in assessments.
- Damon also stated that all appeals should be completed by the end of March, unless an extension was granted.
- Damon explained that his office has been short staffed for the last 4 to 5 years and he doesn't have the man power to have his staff assist with the clerical work associated with the Board of Assessment Appeals.
- Tom suggested endorsing a recommendation regarding a temporary employee in the Tax Assessor's office to assist in the clerical work needed regarding the Board of Assessment Appeal's process. If the Mayor concurs, then the funding will be available out of the Bond Authorization for the Re-valuation, per Diana.

-Informational Only-

Emergency Management – discussion of proposal from Consulting Engineering Services for \$749,500 to reconfigure electrical wiring at MHS and (on-site) emergency generator to enhance emergency shelter capabilities (informational from proposal available at meeting)

- Bruce Driska explained the current generator was fine for just the school but not for a state mandated shelter. The topic of this generator has been an issue for the past two years and hopefully can be addressed this evening. Diana stated that a \$10,000 provision be set aside for bond counsel fees and interest fees. The \$739,500 will be allotted for the actual project. Hope made the motion to approve and Deb seconded.

-Approved unanimously to send to the Council Floor-

Finance – Appropriation Request for \$5000 to fund Conference line

- Hope stated that as long as the employees were receiving CEU's or it is a state mandated part of their job, then this committee would approve the request to attend a class or a conference. Also the paperwork that comes before this committee needs to be completed and submitted within a timely manner.
- David made the motion to approve and Tom seconded.

-Approved unanimously to send to Council Floor-

Parking – Approval of attendance for two employees at New England Parking Council Conference on March 11-12; discussion of maintenance needs and potential cost to Arcade parking lots

- Diana explained that she was notified earlier today that Geen would not be here this evening to answer questions regarding the conference request nor the Arcade costs.
- Hope asked if they would be receiving CEU's for this conference and also what the total cost would be for the two days.
- Unfortunately the Director was unavailable to answer such questions; so both requests received a no.

-Both requests were denied by this committee-

Police – Grant Confirmation for Animal Shelter Donations, creation of separate revenue line/ account to monitor shelter donations separately

- Hope made the motion to approve and Deb seconded.

-Approved Unanimously-

Health – Grant Confirmation for lead Poisoning Prevention from State of CT for \$9556; Appropriation Request for \$3000 for Shelter Services to assist individuals and families displaced from structural damage, fire, flood, etc.

- Diana explained that the full \$10,000 is applied to offset the Nurse's salary on the City side.
- Tom made a request for Carl to notify the Directors, "All Grant Confirmations that are on our agenda be brought to this committee with the appropriate breakdown of how the grant is to be allocated."
- This request was approved unanimously.
- The request for the \$3000 was tabled, then revoked, Tom made the motion and Hope seconded.
- Tom made the motion to send to the Council Floor without the endorsement from this committee with the request that either the Director of Health or Sal Nesci be there to answer questions.
- Dave and Tom also stressed that if a Director has a request on the Finance & Government agenda then they need to be at the Finance & Government meeting to either explain or answer any questions which this committee may have, if no one shows for the meeting they will automatically be tabled until the next Finance & Government meeting. Hope made the motion to approve and Deb seconded.

Mayor's Office – Resolution authorizing Mayor to enter into contract with Brian Wishneff & Associates for tax credit consulting service related to Eckersley Hall Building rehabilitation

- Hope made the motion to approve and Mary seconded.

F & G Committee – discuss rescheduling November 2014 meeting from Wednesday 26th to another date (Thanksgiving is the 27th)

- Diana discussed the date change for the November meeting. November 25th at 7pm was the date in which this committee agreed upon, with the exception of David Bauer.

-Approved-

- Diana also announced that Cromwell finally accepted with a 5 to 2 vote, Middletown to join the Mattabassett regional sewer District.

Regular Reports – Information Only

- Transfer of Funds/BOE Transfers
- General Fund Appropriations
- City's Investments
- Monthly Expenditure Summary Report
- Tax Collection Recap Report
- Department Over-Time Reports

6. The next meeting is March 26, 2014 at 7pm in Room 208

Meeting Adjourned
Tracks: MZ0000091-118

Respectfully
Submitted by,

Tracy Vess on behalf of Carl R. Erlacher